

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 134465

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 134465

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, ZA, US

SUBJECT:TIMES OF ZAMBIA CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT AND
SECRETARY

REF: LUSAKA 1009

1. DEPT. AGREES PARA 2 REFTEL ON DESIRABILITY OF CHARGE'S
EXPRESSING OUR CONCERN TO GOZ RE SCURRILOUS EDITORIAL ATTACK
ON PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY, AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS
FOR U.S./ZAMBIAN RELATIONS.

2. WE CONCUR WITH EMBASSY SUGGESTION THAT IN ABSENCE OF
FORMIN, MINISTER OF STATE SILWIZYA IS APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL
FOR CHARGE TO CONTACT. ALSO CONCUR THAT PAO BURNS TAKE
MATTER UP WITH TIMES EDITOR PUNABANTU.

3 IN GENERAL, WE CONCUR IN SUBSTANCE OF APPROACH AS OUT-
LINED IN REFTEL. BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE, HOWEVER,
TO MAKE POINT RE GRZ'S ASSOCIATION WITH PAPER'S EDITORIAL
LESS BLUNTLY THAN LANGUAGE PROPOSED IN REFTEL

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PAGE 02 STATE 134465

4. IN SUM, DCM AND PAO SHALL MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) USG IS DISMAYED THAT TIMES SAW FIT TO INDULGE IN SUCH PERSONALLY VIRULENT AND UNJUSTIFIED CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY IN JUNE 1 COLUMN.

(B) SUCH IRRESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM CAN ONLY NEEDLESSLY STRAIN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AT A TIME WHEN BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN INTENT ON IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING AND RELATIONS. WITHOUT QUESTIONING THE RIGHT OF THE TIMES TO COMMENT ON ISSUES AS IT SEES FIT, WE NEVERTHELESS DEPLORE PERSONAL ATTACKS ON U.S. LEADERSHIP.

(C) WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE GRZ WILL USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE TIMES TO ENCOURAGE IT TO GIVE A MORE BALANCED TREATMENT OF THE U.S. IN ITS COLUMNS.

5. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS WILL TAKE SIMILAR LINE IN MEETING WITH ZAMBIAN AMBASSADOR MWALE IN NEAR FUTURE. IN ADDITION, AMBASSADOR WILKOWSKI PLANS DISCUSS BOTH COLUMN AND PRESS TREATMENT OF U.S. WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BANDA AND WITH PRESIDENT KAUNDA FOLLOWING HER RETURN TO LUSAKA ON OR ABOUT JUNE 13. KISSINGER

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